

## ON THE RED ROAD

Submitted by the  
**Waabshki-Miigwan  
Drug Court Program  
Team**

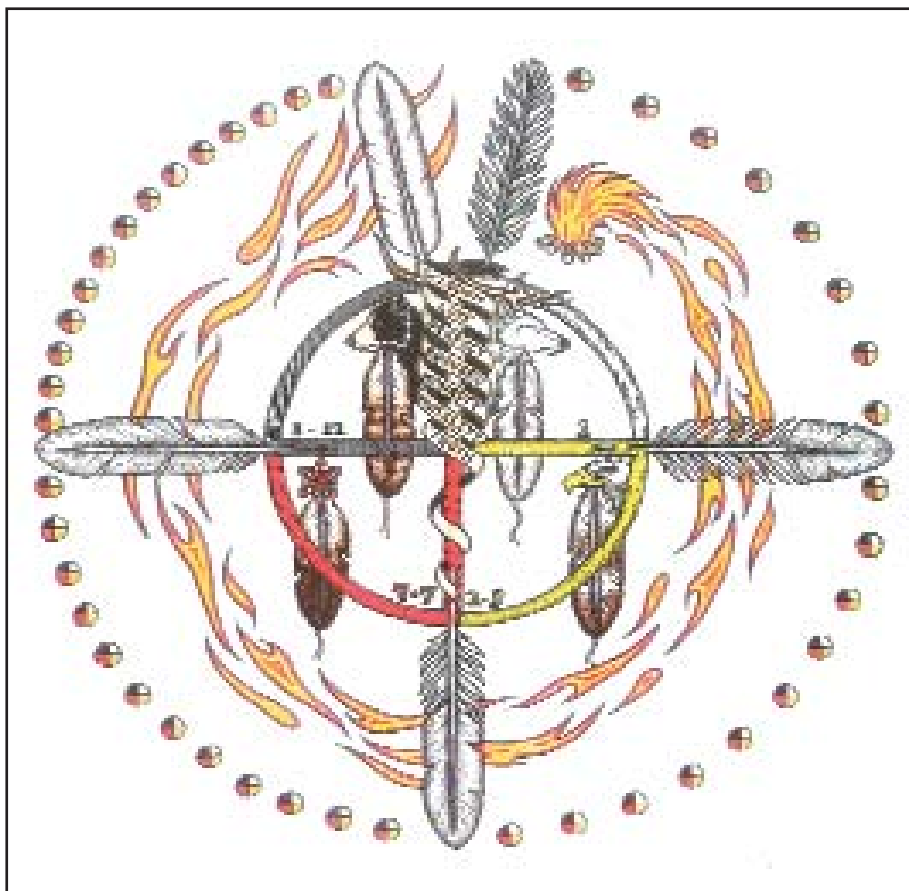
Happy spring everyone! As we reported in April 2011 issue of *Odawa Trails*, we will be posting brief articles on a monthly basis in order to update the LTBB Community on significant development and achievements within the Waabshki-Miigwan Drug Court Program (WMDCP) through this "Milestones" series.

This month, the WMDCP team was able to significantly broaden our outreach to include citizens without criminal convictions. Historically, participants usually become involved as a participant in drug courts following a criminal conviction when the judge orders the participant to successfully complete drug court as part of his or her probation or a condition of a plea agreement. In our tribal community, however, we have had an interesting issue arise that the Tribal Law and Policy Institute (TLPI), the agency that is the technical advisor for our grant, had not addressed before. Following a community meeting by TLPI site visitors, Judge Joe Flies Away and Diana Webster, in August 2010, the court has had several inquiries about voluntary participation in the WMDCP.

Subsequently, the Tribal Judiciary passed an amendment to the Civil Court Rules, Rule XXXVI, Waabshki-Miigwan, which would allow tribal citizens without criminal convictions, but who wanted

"On the Red Road" articles feature stories written by LTBB Community Members in recovery which are gathered and submitted by the LTBB Waabshki-Miigwan Drug Court Program Team. The purpose of the "On the Red Road" series is to instill hope in the suffering alcoholic-addict by sharing our experiences in addiction and recovery, thereby, presenting the viable option of a healthy lifestyle On the Red Road.

Joe Lucier, WMDCP Coordinator



help with their substance abuse problems, to petition to be admitted to Waabshki-Miigwan on a self-referral basis. The only difference would be the self-referred participant would not be jailed for a severe drug court violation whereas others referred by the court could be. The self-referral option of our tribal adult program is unique to Waabshki-Miigwan and came at the request of community members. We can only conclude this is a program long-needed in our community, to restore our most vulnerable citizens to wellness with the support of the community as a whole.

Drug courts operate on a system of rewards and sanctions for compliance and non-compliance. In other words, when participants do well and progress in the program, they may be rewarded i.e. receive praise from the judge or team members, receive small gifts such as gas cards or have

their court fines reduced. If, however, participants violate the rules or fail to complete weekly assignments or obligations or break the law, they will be sanctioned. Such sanctions may include having their participation in drug court extended by a week, having to complete community service or having to spend time in jail for a serious infraction or violation of the law. Self-referred clients, however, would not be ordered to jail.

By opening the door for volunteers to enter the WMDCP, we have provided a very useful service to our community. In early recovery, it is critical a person benefit from the accountability provided by others. The Tribal Court WMDCP can offer unique accountability for community members who are reaching out for help. The WMDCP team approach involves multiple levels of accountability with several staff-client contacts throughout each week.

If you know of someone struggling with substance abuse problems and in need of assistance, I hope you will consider passing on this information. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Joe Lucier, WMDCP Coordinator, at 231-838-9710 or [jlucier@ltbbodawansn.gov](mailto:jlucier@ltbbodawansn.gov).

*Artwork by Tony Miron.*